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To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am a software developer. I know from first hand experience that Microsoft makes changes to its operating system just to make it incompatible with the previous version. This requires me to make my own product more complicated and expensive to the customer. This additional cost provides no improvement. Changes must be made since all new systems ship with the latest version of Microsoft's software.

Microsoft fails to fully disclose the Application Programming Interface (API). This hurts software developers since we do not have all the information required to build an efficient interface with Microsoft products. Microsoft further obfuscates this interface by errors in the documentation and errors in their implementation of the API. Microsoft creates undocumented interfaces and file formats only in house Microsoft developers know about.

It might be inappropriate to require new operating systems to support all APIs. There should be some limitation on API changes that provide no real benefit. Requiring Microsoft to make all the source code available to developers is a reasonable solution to this problem. Developers can easily figure out what API documentation and implementation is in error. Undocumented APIs are clearly visible in the source code. This solution will provide a level playing field for all software developers. This will not give anyone a license to change the Microsoft product and deliver an altered product. It does give developers an opportunity to determine exactly what happens when they use a Microsoft API so that they can use it correctly.

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